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MAKE A DATE TO MARKET YOUR POULTRY

A discussion by Hobart Creighton, Director of the Poultry Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, and Kenneth M. Gapen, Radio Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Recorded: October 25, 1945. Time: 6 minutes, 28 seconds, without announcer's parts.

ANNOUNCER'S OPENING AND CLOSING

OPENING

ANNOUNCER (LIVE):

Since military requirements for chicken and turkey are now filled, record supplies can be directed to civilian markets. This situation has caused some problems for poultry raisers and processing plants. By transcription from Washington, let's talk over the turkey and chicken situation with Hobart Creighton, Director of the Poultry Branch of the Department of Agriculture's Production and Marketing Administration....with Ken Gapen of the Department lending a hand. All set Ken?

CLOSING

ANNOUNCER (LIVE):

Friends, that was Hobart Creighton, Director of the Poultry Branch of the Production and Marketing Administration, and Ken Gapen, of the United States Department of Agriculture, discussing the poultry situation.

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TRANSCRIPTION:

GAPEN: You bet...and I'd like to start by saying the poultry industry has done a swell job of wartime food production. I know you'll back me up there, Mr. Creighton...

CREIGHTON: No question about that, Ken...

GAPEN: And you'd probably say that the large poultry crop we now have is due to heavy wartime demands for poultry by both military forces and civilians?

CREIGHTON: No question about that, either. Turkey production is at an all-time high. We expect between 650 and 675 million pounds of turkey, dressed weight, to be marketed this year. That's about a fourth more than last year. And chicken-meat production is up 5 to 10 percent.

GAPEN: Well...that's mighty good news for all of us who've been wishing for more chicken and turkey on our tables. Now, Mr. Creighton, we all know, of course, that there're large numbers of chickens and turkeys still to be marketed. And we know also, that processing plants are probably having a lot of trouble dressing the huge quantities of poultry being offered. Can farmers do anything to help ease this situation?

CREIGHTON: I think they can. It's just not possible for most processors to dress all the birds that might be offered them at one time. Labor is still scarce in these plants. And we have a rather tight cold storage space situation in some sections of the country. But.... if farmers and poultry raisers make orderly sales...if they stretch sales out over a longer period this year...the situation can be met.

GAPEN: Now, on the question of storage space, I can see how farm families might help out there...they might can or put in freezer lockers some of the hens and pullets they're culling now...

CREIGHTON: That could be a big help...also, it's a good tip for town and city folks who have freezer lockers or equipment to do some home canning.

GAPEN: What you've said about the shortage of help and cold-storage space certainly brings out the need to market poultry systematically this year. So, let's run over a few pointers on how to market poultry systematically...

CREIGHTON: The first step is to contact your processor or regular poultry dealer. You see, if a farmer waits until...say, Friday or Saturday ...when he might be making a trip to town...and takes a crate or two or three of chickens with him, the dealer might not be able to handle them. Or he might offer you a lower than current price...

GAPEN: I see what you're driving at--make a date with the dealer first.

CREIGHTON: That's it, exactly. If the farmer will first find out when the dealer can handle his poultry, he will be surer of a good market for his birds. This habit of making a marketing date also helps the processor. If the processor knows when shipments will be coming, he can schedule work in his plant to keep it in top performance each day of the week.

GAPEN: So both farmer and processor profit by orderly marketing. The farmer will be getting higher prices by now glutting the market...

CREIGHTON: And the processor will not be overcrowding his plant, and taking up floor space he needs with birds he can't dress immediately. Another thing...it's expensive for a processor to hold birds if he has to feed them any length of time.

GAPEN: Now, Mr. Creighton, let's tackle the question of poultry price. With Army buying discontinued for the present, and greater supplies of red meat for civilians, we won't have a scarcity of poultry...that's why, of course, we had high prices the first 8 months of this year. So, what do you think the poultry price situation may be this fall?

CREIGHTON: Let's talk about chickens first. Prices on chickens are not expected to be as high this fall as last. But remember, it's only recently civilians have been able to buy as many chickens as they'd apparently like to have. Prices for hens have been quite steady lately. If farmers will market their poultry in an orderly way, it's believed that hen prices can remain fairly steady the rest of the culling season.

GAPEN: Now that's chicken...how about turkey?

CREIGHTON: Turkey prices are already somewhat lower than last season. It seems to me turkeys will move to consumers at about present price levels. With thousands and thousands of service men and women back home, people will really celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas this year.

GAPEN: Which makes us all mighty happy we've got a big turkey crop...with plenty of white meat for everybody. Now, Mr. Creighton, what would you say about the prospects for egg prices?

CREIGHTON: It's expected egg prices will decline more than seasonally this winter. By next spring they'll be considerable lower than in the spring of 1945. That means egg profits will be lower...

GAPEN: So wise farmers will probably begin now to concentrate on more efficient egg production?

CHREIGHTON: Yes, and the first step toward more efficient flock management is to have only early, good-quality pullets. Then, don't overcrowd your birds, and feed them properly. A 100-percent pullet flock is a good way to get top efficiency and the best use of your feed. Also, you can expect less mortality in an all-pullet flock.

GAPEN: You mean it's best not to keep old birds...

CHREIGHTON: That's the idea...even if it means a smaller flock next year. The exceptions of course are specialized breeding flocks, or keeping some hens for breeding purposes. It's a good practice to have a ratio of 25 hens to 75 pullets...and preferably to keep the young birds separate from the old.

GAPEN: I think that recommendation's so important, it should be repeated... 25 hens to 75 pullets...

CHREIGHTON: Farmers following this recommendation should cull out the least productive hens. For a really efficient flock, they should also cull the pullets hatched after June first, and the cockerels... unless the cockerels are to be used as breeders next spring.

GAPEN: How does this culling program tie in with orderly marketing?

CHREIGHTON: Here again, a check with the dealer is the crux of the problem. Even if a farmer cannot find an immediate buyer for his chickens, this shouldn't prevent culling operations. It's a good plan to keep the old hens, the pullets, and the cockerels you want to sell separate from the laying flock. If a farmer is short of protein feeds, he can feed these birds straight grain rations until his dealer can take them.

GAPEN: Now, to close we'll sum up the highlights of this good advice you've given us, Mr. Creighton. First, both chicken and turkey are going to be in plentiful supply and housewives can buy all they need to satisfy the poultry appetites in their families. Second: Orderly marketing will pay this year, so contact your market outlets before selling. Third: In view of the prospect for lower egg prices next spring, have your flock as near 100 percent pullets as possible.

